1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920) 1932
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XXXIII

THE TALENSE

History; Tribal, Clan, and Soog' *Organization*

INTRODUCTORY: The Talense occupy the area shown on the map. According to the 1921 census report they number 29,972 persons of both sexes. Specimens of the language, called Talene or Talen', have been given in Chapter III. Their appearance, their houses, customs, religion, and organization all seem to me to be very similar to those of their neighbours, the Nankanse. Their languages, too, are very much alike. Had the Talense not been labelled with a separate appellation, I doubt if the anthropologist—save after, perhaps, a very minute investigation—would have considered it necessary to deal with them as a group distinct from the Namnam and the Nankanse. Nevertheless, in accordance with the plan which I mapped out, I have done so. Rites and customs, already investigated, discussed, and described, are here approached from a different angle. Results so obtained are always valuable, even where there is a certain inevitable repetition. The process serves also to fill gaps in the work which has gone before, to which the information obtained later may be considered as supplementary.

In dealing with this and the remainder of the tribes, I have endeavoured to group my facts, as far as possible, under the chapter headings already adopted. This arrangement will enable my readers the more readily to piece together the sum total of the data available concerning any one particular subject, and I hope will mitigate somewhat the defects in presentation for which I have already apologized.

The history of the tribal wanderings of this people follows the same lines as that with which we are now familiar. This history is the record of the migrations, not of the tribe *qua* tribe, but of every clan, the composite of which now forms the group called the Talense (s. Talena; language Talene.) The tribal histories, specimens of which are about to be related, tell of the migrations (within comparatively narrow limits of time and space) of the groups which have for some hundreds of years supplied the Territorial Rulers. Of the wanderings of the original people themselves, who are now largely merged with this foreign element, nothing is really known, except that they were undoubtedly of the stock which I have termed the 'Mole group', who seem to

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There were extraneous difficulties too. In 1938, to quote Lord Hailey,[1] there was 'no systematic demand for research workers' in anthropology in Great Britain. Then came the war, bringing with it issues of far greater moment than the study of the social structure of a remote and unimportant African people.

The requirements of war-time publication have made it necessary to publish separately the two parts of which this study of Tale social structure consists. Though each part is self-contained, I had hoped that they could appear together in one volume. A considerable amount of compression has been necessary in order to fit the book to the Procrustean bed of austerity printing. As my concern in this book is with Tale social structure, I have preferred to leave the descriptive data pertaining to my central theme fairly full, and to compress material that can be more fully dealt with in later studies. This applies particularly to what I have written about Tale religion. It is sometimes said that anthropological monographs tend to be too long. Unfortunately, in descriptive work of this kind brevity is not always reconcilable with accuracy, however attractive it may be from the literary angle. As it is, anthropologists have to exercise rigorous selection in presenting the small fraction of their field material that it is physically possible to publish. One of the objects of any descriptive monograph must be to record material that can be used for comparative and theoretical studies. Excessive brevity (which easily lapses into facile generalization) has often proved a more serious defect, from this point of view, than an inelegant multiplicity of detail. Failing statistical devices, there is no alternative for the anthropologist who wishes to support his general statements with the evidence of observed fact, but adequate descriptive detail. I fear that I have not obeyed this rule as strictly as I should have liked to, owing to lack of space.

My object, however, has been a limited one. I have not attempted to give an 'outline' of 'the whole culture'. I consider that a work of that kind is best done in the traditional ethnographic manner of such classics as Junod's *Life of a South African Tribe* or Smith and Dale's *Ila-Speaking Peoples*. It is a different thing to study those attributes of a social system that pertain to it *as a whole*, by contrast with those attributes that pertain to a limited sector of the society or a single institutional complex. Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic of the Azande* are examples of the latter type of study. But all studies in social structure or political organization or economic structure, being concerned with the factors of social integration, are necessarily concerned with attributes of the whole society. It is chiefly because these categories of social relations are the constant elements in all social activities and constitute the common medium through which social activities are articulated with one another that we can speak of a society as a unit, or of its different aspects as being functionally interrelated or mutually consistent. What I have tried to do in this book is to give a descriptive analysis of Tale social structure at the level of corporate

[1] Lord Hailey, 'The Role of Anthropology in Colonial Development', *Man*, xliv, 1944, No. 5; cf. also A. I. Richards, 'Practical Anthropology in the Lifetime of the International African Institute', *Africa*, xiv. 6, 1944.

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group organization. This is the framework of the political system of the Tallensi, which I have described briefly elsewhere[1] and hope to write about more fully later; and it is in its turn built up on the system of interpersonal social relations which I have called kinship in the narrow sense and describe in the second part of this study.[2]

As I am analysing Tale social structure in this book I treat Tale culture primarily as the content of social relations and not in its own right. I discuss customs, beliefs, conventional usages, religious values, and so forth, principally as indices of social relations. That is why I have not been able to make use of the concepts and methods of the students of culture history and of the psychology of culture. The recent work of Benedict, Mead, Bateson, Linton, and others in the United States promises to revolutionize the study of the psychology of culture; but as Bateson argues,[3] with admirable cogency, both the approach and the aims of that study differ from those of the study of social structure.

Except for one or two topics where they seemed apposite, I have made no use of comparative data, because my aim is entirely different from that of a comparative study. Actually, there is extremely little in the literature on the Voltaic region, apart from Rattray's and Labouret's works,[4] that is relevant, and the mere citation of information from other parts of West Africa would have no value in an analytical study. Africanists will see, however, that many features of Tale social organization are typical of patrilineal societies in West Africa and some Tale institutions have parallels in South, East, and Central Africa.

I have also kept general theoretical discussions out of this book as far as possible. It was Poincaré, I believe, who remarked that whereas physical scientists have a subject-matter, sociologists, for lack of a subject-matter, spend most of their time discussing methodology. I have tried to stick to my subject-matter, using whatever theoretical guidance I could find to make it clear and to interpret it to the best of my knowledge of the Tallensi.

Observation in the field showed that every significant social activity among the Tallensi is tied up with the lineage system. I set out, therefore, to investigate the function of the lineage in Tale social organization, and the result is this book. I consider that it should be the first task of every field-worker to give an account of the social structure of the people he has studied. On this foundation he can subsequently build his studies of separate functional systems, such as law or economics or religion, of particular institutional complexes or social mechanisms, or of the culture as a whole. As regards the Tallensi, I have no hesitation in saying that it is impossible fully to understand their economic, jural, or ritual institutions without a grasp of their lineage system.

While avoiding theoretical discussions I have drawn attention to characteristics of Tale society that have a wider theoretical interest. I was impressed, in the field, with the apparent stability of Tale society over

[1] In *African Political Systems*, edited by M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard.
[2] Forthcoming under the title of *The Web of Kinship Among the Tallensi*.
[3] Gregory Bateson, *Naven*.
[4] Cit. *infra*.

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121 the historical time span consciously recognized by the natives, that is, five or six generations, and probably for a much longer period. I have tried to show how this is associated with the lineage system.

105 At the same time it was clear that stability did not mean stagnation
121 in Tale social life. Nothing could be farther from the way of life of the Tallensi than a rigid regimentation of social behaviour. Observation of the lineage system in action suggested that its distinguishing characteristic, as a regulating factor in the social structure, was its tendency towards equilibrium. This operated in such a way as to leave room for continual internal adjustments in the social organization without endangering its long-term stability.

The tendency towards equilibrium is marked in every sector of Tale society and in the society as a whole; and it is clearly a result of the dominance of the lineage principle in the social structure. Looking at Tale society in this way has helped me to see how the social structure is built up and how its parts are integrated with one another. The factors that determine this equilibrium require further study. But for this a full analysis, firstly, of the economic organization, and secondly, of the religious system of the Tallensi is necessary.

It seems to me that the equilibrium in the social structure is made possible by the conditions of Tale economic life. The almost complete absence of economic differentiation, by occupation or by ownership of resources, and, in particular, the absence of both material and institutional possibilities for capital accumulation or for technical advance, mean that economic interests do not play the part of dynamic factors in the social structure. We do not find permanent social groupings or classes organized solely on the basis of common economic interests, nor do economic differences decisively influence the incidence of political power or of leadership in public affairs. This is one of the major distinctions between Tale society and more highly differentiated West African societies such as the Nupe[1] or European peasant societies. There are no rich peasants and poor peasants, no landlords and tenants, no craft specialists, public officials or money-lenders, among the Tallensi. Economic factors are neutral, so to speak, in relation to the social structure, the primary constitutive factors of which are genealogical, local, and ritual relations.

But if the equilibrium of Tale society is made possible by the economic structure, and if the lineage system is the chief mechanism of social organization by which it is maintained, the system of religious values is undoubtedly the supreme sanction of its existence. I have been able to give only an indication of this as there has not been space in this book for an extensive treatment of Tale religion. Ritual activities are so conspicuous and so frequent in Tale social life that I was bound to give a great deal of attention to them in the field. One cannot understand the springs of conduct among the Tallensi without a good knowledge of their religious values.

121 The structural equilibrium of Tale society is associated with its segmentary form, which I regard as a particularly important characteristic of the social structure as a whole. Elsewhere[2] Evans-Pritchard and I have

[1] Cf. S. F. Nadel, *A Black Byzantium*. [2] *African Political Systems*, Introduction.

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tentatively described two main types of political organization found in Africa, a segmentary type and a pyramidal or centralized type. Among the Tallensi, who belong to the first type, it can be seen that the segmentary principle operates right through the social system as a dynamic factor of social organization. From one point of view it can be regarded as simply the obverse of the principle of equilibrium. It is connected, also, with the idea of polarity which plays a very big part in all Tale institutions.

These characteristics of Tale society are perhaps merely aspects of a common principle of social organization. I do not think there is anything novel or abstruse about them. Every anthropologist knows that kinship systems are built up on the complementary relationships of the two sexes in marriage and parenthood. The concept of segmentation derives from Durkheim.[1] So also does the concept of social equilibrium, via Radcliffe-Brown's and Malinowski's theories of structure and function. These or analogous concepts are common currency in contemporary social anthropology, and their virtue lies not in their explanatory but in their exploratory value. It is in this sense that I have used them.

There are other subjects of general theoretical interest for the study of which Tale society affords useful data. There is the problem of the range of social relations, in space and in time, consciously recognized in a primitive society without a centralized form of government and without permanent records of the past. I have touched on one side of this problem in discussing what I have called the field of social relations. The function of time in a segmentary social structure has recently been investigated by Evans-Pritchard,[2] and I have referred to it in this book. People like the Tallensi do not have the idea of historical time as a specific dimension of their social life. They do not think of the lapse of time as being associated with cumulative changes in their culture or social structure but rather as a periodical or cyclical rhythm of eternal repetition. They do not think of their history as something separate from, and leading up to, their contemporary way of life. They seem to live wholly in the present and immediately recollected past. But social life is a pattern of processes, and the time dimension is a significant factor in social structure everywhere. Among the Tallensi the time factor is, as it were, embedded in the social structure and, as with the Nuer, there is a direct correlation between the time perspective recognized by the society and the social structure. This suggests that the absence of a consciousness of history in primitive societies like the Tallensi is not due solely to lack of permanent records. There are primitive societies, especially those that have royal dynasties, in which a sense of history exists and is kept alive through folk-tales, ritual chants and heirlooms, royal ceremonies and praise songs, and so forth.[3] The political and social structure, including the principal political values of a people, directly shapes the notions of time and of history that prevail among them. Traditions of migration and of origins fall into place

[1] Durkheim, E., *La Division du travail sociale*.

[2] Evans-Pritchard, E. E., *The Nuer*, ch. 3. Cf. also my paper on 'The Significance of Descent in Tale Social Structure', cit. *infra*.

[3] The large West African kingdoms—Ashanti, Yoruba, Dahomey, Mossi, and others—are good examples of such societies.

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as myths that sanction or reflect contemporary social relationships and usages.[1]

In short, my chief aim has been to give a descriptive analysis of Tale social structure; but I hope that the material will also be useful for comparative and theoretical studies.

II

My wife and I spent nearly two and a half years in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, between January 1934 and April 1937. For most of that time we were amongst the Tallensi.[2] Our head-quarters were at Tongo, which proved to be an ideal base for our work. There we were at the hub of Taleland and within a few hours' march or ride of any part of the country we might wish to visit. We trekked over most of Taleland and also visited the chief centres of the neighbouring tribes, in particular the Mamprusi. As there is no linguistic literature for the Tallensi, we had to learn their dialect from scratch, with the assistance of a semi-literate interpreter and the scanty literature on Mole and Dagbane. It took us about six months to learn enough Talni for workaday communication with the people. By the end of our first tour we became proficient enough to dispense with an interpreter. Nevertheless, I know only too well that we reached but a moderate standard in our vocabulary and in our appreciation of the finer shades of thought and feeling that can be expressed in Talni.

We were the only white people who had ever lived among the Tallensi for any length of time and the first to speak their dialect. After their initial suspicions had been allayed, we were quickly accepted and soon had many friends. Our first informants soon got to understand our aims and entered into the spirit of our work with sincerity and zeal. They were mostly men and women who assisted us out of friendship and trust in our good faith. I wish to thank them for their confidence in us and for the devotion with which they instructed us in the way of life of their people. We remember with gratitude the patience, tolerance, tact, and friendliness of many dozens of Tale men, women, and children. They welcomed us to their homes, their domestic occasions, and their esoteric and public religious gatherings. We learnt more from them about humanity than I have the skill to write of. Tɔŋ-Yikpɛmdaan, my first friend and mentor and one of nature's gentlemen, was a fount of wisdom. The late Chief of Tongo, Na Naam Bion, was a proud, intelligent, and forthright man whose support stood us in good stead and whose great store of knowledge was freely opened to us. Many others, too numerous to mention, were our faithful friends and zealous helpers.

My field-work among the Tallensi was made possible by the grant of a fellowship from the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. I appreciate the privilege of having held this fellowship and record with gratitude the unfailing interest which the Directors (Dr. J. H.

[1] As Radcliffe-Brown showed in *The Andaman Islands*, and Malinowski in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*.

[2] In 1943, in the course of other duties, I had occasion to spend some time in the Northern Territories. I found that no social changes of significance had taken place among the Tallensi since 1937.

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Oldham and later Professor Sir Reginald Coupland) and the Secretary-General (Sir Hanns Vischer) took in the work of the Institute's fellows. I appreciate, in particular, the freedom they allowed us in carrying out the research entrusted to us and the encouragement they gave us to aim at high scientific standards. I am greatly indebted to Professor D. Westermann, who was one of the Institute's research directors. His great scholarship in West African languages and cultures made his counsel of exceptional value. The success my wife and I were able to achieve in learning Talni owed much to a short course we were fortunate enough to have with him. This, like my preliminary training at the London School of Economics, was made possible by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

I chose the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast for my field-work on the advice of the late Captain R. S. Rattray. His name is written in indelible letters in the annals of West African ethnology and I was proud to follow in his footsteps. His pioneer ethnographical survey of the Northern Territories saved me months of labour.

I made Tongo our head-quarters on the advice of Administrative and other Government officers working in the Northern Territories. My wife and I owe a special debt of gratitude to the then Chief Commissioner Mr. W. J. A. (now Sir Andrew) Jones for the keen interest he took in our work and for many helpful arrangements he made to facilitate it. We have also to thank Sir Andrew and Lady Jones for many personal kindnesses. I owe my understanding of the spirit and methods of colonial administration chiefly to Sir Andrew and his officers.

My wife and I also remember gratefully the unfailing kindness and hospitality of Colonel G. H. Gibbs, M.C., Sir Andrew's successor as Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, who was District Commissioner, Mamprusi, in 1934–7, and of Mrs. Gibbs. A visit to them was a heaven-sent rest from the strenuous routine of field-work. Many discussions with Colonel Gibbs helped to broaden my understanding of the problems of government and social development in the Northern Territories.

Captain J. L. Mothersill, Mr. E. W. Ellison, and Mr. A. F. Kerr, who were in charge of the Zuarungu district at various times during our stay there, put us greatly in their debt by their readiness to help us.

Our nearest European neighbour was Mr. [illegible] W. Lynn, M.B.E., Superintendent of Agriculture at Zuarungu. Mr. Lynn's friendship was a great stand-by to us at all times. He was at that time engaged on his now well-known survey of native agriculture in the Zuarungu district and we had many long talks on this subject. Farming is a subject of supreme interest to the natives; and though it does not come into this book very much, I should have made little progress in the field without some knowledge of Tale agriculture. I received great help from Mr. Lynn on this side of my field-work.

I have, in this study, stuck to my last and dealt with an anthropological problem from an anthropological point of view. But I hope that what I have written will also be of service to Government officers in the Northern territories.

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much as a quarter of a mile apart. The greater congestion of the older settlements is correlated with greater fragmentation of holdings, due to the greater length of time they have been continuously occupied.

The population of Taleland, as of the remainder of the trans-Volta plateau, appears to have been increasing steadily in the recent past. In the older settlements it is clearly excessive in relation to the available land and the level of technical skill of the natives. This is the opinion both of Government officials and of the natives themselves. The natives always say that shortage of cultivable land was the main incentive for the migration of young men to the peripheral 'bush' zone in the past; and the men who have come to settle permanently in the peripheral settlements during the last two or three decades always ascribe their move from their natal settlements to the same cause. Labour migration during the past ten or fifteen years has been much influenced by pressure of population on the land in the most congested areas.

These economic adaptations of the natives and their general standard of living, as well as the territorial distribution of such clans as Mosuor biis in Taleland, compel the inference that the population has been increasing for some time. But adequate statistics for measuring the present rate of increase in the population, or for establishing its trend in the past, are lacking.[1]

There are no clear-cut geographical features regulating the distribution of homesteads in most settlements. The location of water-supplies has no bearing on it, since Tale agriculture relies wholly on rainfall, and domestic requirements are a secondary consideration, and offer no difficulties in the wet season. Towards the end of the dry season the domestic consumption of water is cut to the minimum necessary for cooking and drinking. When water is scarce, the average Talaŋ is content to go unwashed for weeks at a stretch. By the end of the dry season most surface supplies have vanished, and water is usually obtained from shallow pits, artificially deepened and enlarged from time to time by those who use them. These pits are regular water-holes (*bulaŋ*), utilized solely for that purpose throughout the year. A large settlement has several, situated in the dry beds of what are strong streams (*kolaŋ*), or in the depressions (*bo'ag*) which become swamps and pools during the rains. A water-hole generally serves the needs of the homesteads within a radius of about a quarter to half a mile. But at times of acute shortage the women and girls may have to go a mile or more to fill their water-pots.

Variations in elevation influence the scatter of homesteads to some extent. Inured though they are to the discomforts of their climate, the Tallensi prefer to build on high ground if possible. Thus, in the older settlements, homesteads tend to cluster closer together where there is a rise in the ground, and to be few and far between where there is a de-

[1] Reliable reproduction rates, either for the Northern Territories as a whole or for Taleland in particular, cannot be calculated from the data given in the abstract of the census of 1931, and there are no other official statistics, published or unpublished, which could be used for this purpose. My own exiguous demographic data suggest that the population of the older Tale settlements is increasing, though not steeply.

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It emerges when certain social processes and activities are in play; it is potential when they are not in play. Difficult as it is to convey this to a reader, it is something which the observer is constantly aware of. A maximal lineage emerges only in relation to other maximal lineages, and a clan in relation to other clans. When we speak of lineages being segmentarily related to one another and to the composite clan embracing them, we mean that their relations are mutual, symmetrical, and summative. A is related to B in the same way as B is related to A and the sum of their interrelations gives us a set of relations of the same kind but of higher order.

Putting it thus abstractly, however, leaves out a point of the utmost importance. The relations between individuals and between groups in which corporate units like the maximal lineage emerge are social relations. They are subject to jural, moral, and ritual norms; they are the means of achieving human purposes, of getting a livelihood, of marrying and procreating, of expressing emotional attitudes, organizing the intercourse of people, and so forth. A maximal lineage emerges in terms of jurally, morally, and ritually defined ties and cleavages that exist between it and other specified maximal lineages. A segmentary relationship between lineages or any other social units implies the existence of specific ties and cleavages which have the effect of making each unit a determining factor in the emergence of the other units. This is the basis of the concept of a field of social relations which we have used to describe the way in which lineages are differentiated from and articulated with one another.

The concept of a field of social relations has enabled us to see how clanship acts as a factor of social integration. Through the overlapping of the fields of clanship of adjacent maximal lineages chains of clanship ties interlinking a whole group of lineages are established. Thus each lineage can be regarded as the centre of a series of zones of clanship of increasing amplitude and diminishing integration. The clan is the central region of such a system, a wider community like that of the Hill Talis constitutes the next region, and beyond that lie still wider regions of diminishing importance for the members of the lineage that is taken as the starting-point.

We have seen that there are three major sub-regions within the socio-geographic region we have called Taleland, within each of which there is a greater degree of interarticulation of lineages and clans, and therefore closer integration, than there is between them. But the three sub-regions overlap with each other and with adjacent non-Tale regions. They have a particularly important connecting system in the chain of sub-clans of Mosuor biis.

This system of regions or communities constituted primarily by the operation of the ties and cleavages of clanship is the foundation of a scheme of ritual values and relationships which serves to reinforce the clanship organization by means of mystical sanctions and by co-ordinating the interrelations of lineages and clans at a higher level. Among the Tallensi the web of clanship and the web of ritual relationships take the place, as mechanisms of social integration, of a constituted governmental

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POSTSCRIPT

THIS book has dealt with the constitution and interrelations of the corporate groupings found in Tale society. But this is only one major aspect of Tale social structure. There is another major aspect of no less importance, the system of interpersonal social bonds that constitutes the Kinship System in the strict sense. The lineage and clan organization forms the permanent framework of social relations in Taleland. But it is based on certain fundamental categories of thought and axioms of conduct that derive from a different cross-section of Tale social life, the domestic organization. The well-worn simile of the warp and the woof is apposite here. We can think of the lineage and clan organization as the warp of the social fabric of the Tallensi. Interwoven with it, sustaining it, and in turn shaped and regulated by it, is the intricate web of interpersonal relations we have described as the Kinship System in the strict sense. Kinship ties grow directly out of the biological, psychological, and social relations of men, women, and children in the domestic nucleus of Tale social life, the agnatic joint family. Unlike lineage ties, they involve the equal and parallel recognition of descent through both parents; and because of this bilateral criterion of social identification in kinship relations, they cut across the lineage structure.[1]

This second major aspect of Tale social structure, the Kinship System, is the subject of our next volume, *The Web of Kinship Among the Tallensi*. Our aim will be not a detailed analysis of all Tale interpersonal relationships through all the levels of social behaviour, but an investigation of their place in the social structure in relation to the lineage and clan organization.

[1] Cf. my previously cited paper on 'The Significance of Descent in Tale Social Structure'.

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FOREWORD

121 THIS book concludes the investigation of Tale social structure begun in *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, 1945. It carries the analysis into the domain of family life and the social ties that grow directly out of marriage and parenthood. This is the domain of kinship, in the current usage of social anthropology.

000 No subject in the whole range of anthropological studies has been so voluminously investigated and debated as kinship. It is no exaggeration to say that every anthropologist of repute has, at some time or another, written about kinship. Nor has this interest been confined to anthropologists. The marriage customs of primitive peoples, their modes of domestic organization, their rules of inheritance and descent, the laws, morals, and religious beliefs associated with family life among them, have furnished material for scholars of many kinds. It is nearly a hundred years since Bachofen's reconstruction of primordial mother-right and McLennan's theory of exogamy and endogamy upset long-standing beliefs about the nature of the human family. It is exactly a century since Lewis Morgan, who may justly be regarded as the father of the scientific study of kinship in primitive society, first wrote about the Iroquois clan. Since then psychologists and philosophers, sociologists, jurists, historians, and others have drawn constantly on the mounting quantity of data concerning primitive kinship to support their theories or confute their opponents.

121 Fortunately for the anthropologist who ventures to write about kinship, the vast mass of literature on the subject contains only a small amount of generalization that has stood the test of modern field research. But this alone would not excuse the omission of reference to the work of other students of the subject in a book on kinship. The chief reason why I have, in this book, referred only to those authorities whose writings have direct bearing on my material is because the general problems of kinship lie outside the scope of a descriptive monograph.

At the same time the truism that facts only acquire meaning for science in the light of an adequate theory is specially relevant to the study of kinship. 'No systematic thought has made progress apart from some adequately general working hypothesis, adapted to its special topic', says Whitehead.[1] Kinship studies, right up to

[1] Whitehead, A. N., *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 286.

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121 the present time, have suffered from working hypotheses not adapted to the topic. I was fortunate in that both my chief teachers on this subject, the late Professor Bronislaw Malinowski and Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, approached it with working hypotheses founded on the realities of field observation. Their theories have the merit of being adapted to the methods of observation available to the anthropologist in the field and to the kind of data within his reach. They can be tested in the field, as is most cogently shown in Raymond Firth's book *We, the Tikopia* (1937), which appeared while I was among the Tallensi. I found this book a mine of ideas and a most valuable stimulus to observation.

I have not, however, attempted to give a comprehensive account of family life and kinship among the Tallensi in this book. I am concerned only with kinship in relation to the social structure—that is, in my view, with the fundamental principles of Tale kinship relations as they enter into the organization of collective life. In a society as homogeneous as that of the Tallensi the common denominators of thought, feeling, and action stand out very clearly and the principles governing social behaviour are not so difficult to discern as might be supposed.

178 It is of interest to add that I was able to pay a very short visit to the Tallensi in 1945, after this book was finished. I found that as far as their social structure was concerned there had been no appreciable change since my wife and I first went to Taleland in 1934. But there are many signs that they are on the threshold of a period of rapid change. The war has opened up wider horizons to many of the young men who saw active service. Native Administration has developed greatly; schools are being established; missionaries have started work inside Taleland. The social structure I have described may well undergo many modifications in the next few years, though I do not believe it will alter much in fundamentals for decades.

M. F.

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which utilize the lineage principle in social organization. In contexts where the emphasis is on the lineage considered as a segment of a more inclusive lineage, it is commonly described as a 'room' (*dug*) of the more inclusive 'house' (*yir*). But when Tallensi speak of a *dug* without further specification they generally mean a segment of the order of an inner or medial lineage.

As this nomenclature shows, the internal constitution of the lineage is modelled on that of the polygynous joint family. The standard pattern is that the segments of a lineage trace their descent from the sons by different wives of their common founding ancestor. We shall consider this subject more fully in this book. In consequence, co-ordinate segments of a lineage are referred to as 'brother' (*sunzɔ*) lineages, and their reciprocal rights and obligations, as well as the conventional patterns of sentiments holding between them, are modelled on the mutual relations of brothers.

At the end of our previous book we pointed out that our study of the structure of corporate groups and their interrelations in Tale society covered only one aspect of the total social structure. We spoke of the first part of this study as an analysis of the warp of the social fabric. Our task now is to examine what might be called the woof of the social fabric. Our starting-point, this time, is not the organized corporate group or the framework of continuity and stability in the social structure, but the individual. Our main interest will be in the standard forms and processes of person-to-person relationships and their connexion with the large-scale framework of the society. Our subject, in other words, is Tale kinship in the narrow sense, viewed in relation to the lineage system.

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CHAPTER II

KINSHIP AND THE LINEAGE SYSTEM

The Connexion between Kinship and the Lineage System

128 THE method of analysis we have followed in this study has required, for purposes of description, the isolation of the lineage system from the domestic organization of the Tallensi. In the actual life of the natives, however, these two planes of social structure do not emerge in isolation from each other. Like blood and tissue in the animal organism, they constitute interpenetrating media of Tale social life. Membership of a family and membership of a lineage are equally and often concurrently decisive for the conduct of the individual and for the course of his life. Yet the analytical separation of these two planes of social structure is not entirely artificial. It corresponds to the fact that the interests and ends (primarily political, jural, and ritual) subserved by the lineage system differ significantly from those (primarily economic and reproductive) subserved by the family system, both in their bearing on individual conduct and in the values attached to them by the society.

613 The lineage system is the structural basis of Tale political, jural, and
601 ritual institutions, whereas the domestic organization is the structural
basis of person-to-person relations in the sphere of kinship in the narrow
● 121 sense. One of our main tasks in the present investigation will be to observe how these two categories of interests and ends, and the institutions and practices in which they emerge, are co-ordinated and integrated. For the individual's rights and duties, sentiments and values, manners and moral conduct, his thinking, feeling, and acting, in the context of lineage relationships, on the one hand, and in the context of family relationships on the other, are organically integrated, as are lineage and family in the social structure. This appears most clearly, we shall see, from the way in which segmentation in the domestic family parallels segmentation in the lineage, the two processes being not only simultaneous in time but complementary in function. Fission in the lineage[1] follows the pattern of cellular segmentation in the joint family; and fission in the joint family, as we shall see, follows the lines of cleavage in the effective minimal lineage. The local and the functional groupings of families are regulated by the agnatic distance of the family heads from one another. In the study of Tale kinship usages and values we are confronted, at every step, by the interaction of domestic organization and lineage structure.

602 The Tallensi apply the concepts of kinship to describe and define domestic relations and the person-to-person ties that are derived from them. They use the same concepts in dealing with lineage relations. In

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iii.

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FOOD IN THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY OF THE TALLENSI

M. AND S. L. FORTES

• 121 THE hinterland of the Gold Coast north of the 10th parallel N. Latitude is a land of sparse forestation lying within the Sudanese Zone.[1] The continuous plains, the monotony of which is, in the dry season, broken only by scattered trees, occasional patches of low bush or a low range of hills, have been described as belonging to an 'Orchard bush' type of country. The Tale settlements occupy an area of some 200 square miles, immediately north of the White Volta river, and have a population density of over 170 to the square mile in the settled parts. Agriculture is the basic industry of the Tallensi and their neighbours, but their farms yield only a bare living to the majority of the populace. Unduly late rains or a visitation of locusts spells food deficiency bordering on famine for thousands.

Food, therefore, is a major practical issue in Tale social life. It is also, as in all primitive societies, a fundamental constituent of innumerable social situations not directly connected with nutrition, e.g. sacrifices to ancestral spirits or funeral ceremonies. How diverse are the functions of food in a primitive society may be gathered from Dr. A. I. Richards's *Hunger and Work in a Savage Tribe*. The comprehensive approach adopted by her is impossible in this short paper; nor shall we be able to take up all the questions enumerated in Dr. Raymond Firth's paper[2] on native diet. We shall confine ourselves to an ethnographical description of the place of food in the domestic economy of the Tale.[3] It must be regarded as merely a tentative account.

[1] See A. W. Cardinall, *The Gold Coast* 1931, Government printer, Accra, p. 6.

[2] 'The Sociological Study of Native Diet', *Africa*, vii. 4.

[3] In addition to our observations we have made use of statistical and other information from an unpublished report of Mr. C. W. Lynn, the Assistant Superintendent of Agriculture in the Zuarungu district, of which Tale land forms a part. We wish here to acknowledge our indebtedness to Mr. Lynn, not only for permission to use his report, but also for the direct assistance he gave us in our efforts to study Tale agriculture in the field.

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I. Introduction

121 THERE is no lack of disquisitions on the role of education in the simpler societies. Africa, in particular, has received enormous attention in this connexion. Commissions and congresses have delivered judgment on education in one or another African society. Missionaries, anthropologists, itinerant journalists, travellers, Government officials, and innumerable others have vouchsafed opinions on the subject until it has become smothered in platitudes and generalizations. But empirical studies of a sociological or psychological kind in field or school are far from numerous. In this paper I shall attempt, in outline, such a study.[1]

II. The Sociological Approach

We can commence from two axioms which must be regarded as firmly established both in sociological and in educational theory. It is agreed that education in the widest sense is the process by which the cultural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation, and that schooling is therefore only a part of it. It is agreed, correlatively, that the 'moulding of individuals to the social norm is the function of education such as we find it among these simpler peoples',[2] and, it may be added, among ourselves.

000 Starting from these axioms, anthropologists have explored the conditions and the social framework of education in pre-literate societies. It has been shown that the training of the young is seldom regularized or systematized, but occurs as a 'by-product'[3] of the cultural routine; that the kinsfolk, and particularly the family, are mainly responsible for it; that it is conducted in a practical way in relation to the 'actual

[1] An outline of this paper was first presented in a lecture on 'Play Activities of Primitive African Children' which I gave in March 1936 at the invitation of Paul and Marjorie Abbatt. Dr. Lucy Mair and Dr. E. E. Evans-Pritchard have assisted me greatly with their comments and criticism.

[2] A. W. Hoernlé, 'An Outline of the Native Conception of Education in Africa', *Africa*, iv, 1931. But this axiom has been formulated by many writers, e.g. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, ch. i.

[3] *Vide* Hoernlé, loc. cit.; B. Malinowski, 'Native Education and Culture Contact', *International Review of Missions*, 1936.

[p. 5]

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situations of daily life'.[1] It has been observed that manners and ethical and moral attitudes are first inculcated within the family circle in association with food and eating and with the control of bodily functions. A good deal of discussion has been devoted, also, to what appear to be overtly educational institutions, such as initiation schools and ceremonies, age grades, or secret societies.[2] It has been proved that direct instruction in tribal history, sexual knowledge, and ritual esoterica is promoted by these institutions.

In this way a good deal of information has been accumulated about *what* is transmitted from one generation to the next in pre-literate societies, about the circumstances of this transmission, and the institutional and structural framework within which it occurs. Of the process of education—*how* one generation is 'moulded' by the superior generation, *how* it assimilates and perpetuates its cultural heritage—much less is known. The problem has, indeed, never been precisely formulated,[3] with the result that alleged discussions of primitive education not infrequently prove to be merely descriptions of social structure slightly disguised.

The problem formulated. Education is a social process, a temporal concatenation of events in which the significant factor is time and the significant phenomenon is change. Between birth and social maturity the individual is transformed from a relatively peripheral into a relatively central link in the social structure; from an economically passive burden into a producer; from a biological unit into a social personality irretrievably cast in the habits, dispositions and notions characteristic of his culture. The problem presented by this function of society is of an entirely different order from that presented by the religious or economic or political system of a people. The

[1] R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, pp. 147 ff. This is the most valuable empirical and theoretical contribution to the subject of recent years. There have been various attempts to utilize this principle in planning curricula of schooling in Africa. Cf. W. B. Mumford, 'Malangali Experiments', *Africa*, iii, 1930 and A. D. Helser, *Education of Primitive People*, 1934.

[2] Cf., *inter alia*, E. W. Smith, 'Indigenous Education in Africa', in *Essays presented to C. G. Seligman*, for a useful commentary on this and other general points referred to in this paper; and J. H. Driberg, *At Home with the Savage*, pp. 232 ff.

[3] I refer to Africa here. Margaret Mead in *Coming of Age in Samoa* and *Growing Up in New Guinea* and Firth, op. cit., have done much to clarify it for Oceania. Attention is drawn to the problem in Rev. E. W. Smith's essay, cited above.

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former is primarily a problem of genetic psychology, the latter of cultural and sociological analysis. In studying education in a particular society we ought, ideally, to be able to take its cultural idiom for granted, whereas the first task of sociological analysis is to discover the cultural idiom. Thus, in Taleland one often finds a pair of small boys disputing with childish earnestness as to who is senior. Unless one has observed the scope of the principle of seniority in the social structure one is liable to dismiss this as mere childish play of no importance.

Education, from this point of view,[1] is an active process of learning and teaching by which individuals gradually acquire the full outfit of culturally defined and adapted behaviour. In this paper I shall try to delineate briefly how it occurs in one African society, that of the Tallensi of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. As it will be impossible to compass the whole process of social maturation within the limits of this paper, some of the more conspicuous changes and activities only will be examined.

The sampling problem. My observations were made in the course of a field study of the Tallensi the object of which, in accordance with the usual ethnographical method, was the entire society and its culture. It is impossible in such a case—as other anthropologists have found—to follow up a special psychological problem in a manner commensurate with the criteria of experimental research in England. That will only be achieved when specialists can be induced to take over these investigations.

Such material as I am able to present consequently suffers most from sampling deficiencies. Social behaviour among primitive people appears to be more standardized than among ourselves. Yet variations occur, distributed perhaps in accordance with the normal curve of error as among ourselves but perhaps not. The problem has still to be investigated. Ethnographers are principally interested in

[1] An excursus into genetic psychology would be out of place in this paper, but the reader will observe how much it owes, *inter alia*, to F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering*; K. Koffka, *Growth of the Mind*; S. Isaacs, *Intellectual Growth of Young Children*; *Social Development of Young Children*; C. E. Spearman, *Nature of Intelligence*; and to the writings of Jean Piaget (*Language and Thought of the Young Child*, &c.). I have borrowed also from the anthropological writings already cited and from those of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, particularly from their writings on kinship.

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social and ritual activities. The natives themselves recognize this. It often happens that a man who has not had the advantage of such a training succeeds to eldership or office and has to depend upon the advice and assistance of younger men who have been more fortunate in this respect

IV. The Dynamic Characters of Tale Education

Learning and teaching proceeds within the structural framework and subject to the cultural conceptions outlined in the preceding pages. We must now investigate its dynamic characters. The educational development of a Tale child may be regarded as the gradual acquisition of an ensemble of *interests*, *observances* and *skills*. What these are and how they are acquired constitutes our next inquiry. It is basically a psychological problem, tantamount, up to a point, to analysing the observations already recorded at a different level of behaviour.

An exhaustive investigation will not be attempted in this paper. The detailed exposition of Tale child psychology which should be the foundation of such an investigation cannot be undertaken here, nor would it be practicable to try to follow out the complex pattern of Tale education in all its ramifications in a limited space. I propose, therefore, to discuss only a few of the major trends and significant processes. Learning and teaching is a composite process, a network of interacting factors. For the purpose of analysis it will be necessary to isolate some of the variables, but it will have to be borne in mind that in the actual life-history of a Tale man or woman they occur only in interaction with one another and with numerous others.

The determinants of social behaviour. From the genetic point of view social behaviour is determined by four groups of factors—physiological, psychological, social, and cultural. If we observe a child learning to walk, we can easily distinguish these factors. It cannot start walking until it has reached a certain degree of physiological maturity. As it practises it learns to plan its efforts so as to avoid falls or trying to accomplish too much at a time—a psychological achievement, depending partly on its level of intelligence. Again, a child learns to walk in response, partly, to stimulation, encouragement and even training given by some or all of the people who come

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into its social space. The most important of these is, universally, its mother or some one who acts as mother. Finally, there will be culturally defined ways of encouraging and stimulating or restraining a child in these efforts.

In Taleland these factors of social behaviour are notably interrelated. In general there is a marked parallelism between the trend of physiological and psychological development and that of social and cultural development—unlike our own society in certain strata of which social development lags behind psycho-physical development. A girl of 16 or so in Taleland is not only physiologically mature but has accepted the role of a mature woman in the psychological and social sense. She is married, she has economic duties to perform, she is socially responsible. A boy of the same age is pulling his full weight in the economic system, and it is regarded as entirely reasonable that he should be thinking of marriage and sex life, though it may be four or five years before he finds a wife. It should be added that physiological development among the Tallensi is probably somewhat slower than among ourselves. Accurate age norms could not, as will readily be appreciated, be established, but I have estimated that the average age of walking is about 2 years, of talking about 3 years (though single words like *nma*, my mother, and names of members of the family are used with infantile approximation at about 2 years). As far as one can judge by somatic indications, pubescence in boys commences at about 14 years. Girls, according to my wife's observations, do not as a rule menstruate before the age of about 15–16 years, by which time they have frequently been married for a year or two.

This close correlation between psycho-physical and social development is reflected in the notion held by the natives that physiological growth is a natural process, like the growth of plants and animals. The Tallensi have no elaborate transition rites to mark the passage from one stage of growth to another. Unlike many other West African peoples, they accept the onset of puberty in boys and girls, which they recognize by special terms, with the same casual rationality as they accept the cycle of time itself. Health and well-being of the body must be safeguarded with all the resources of their empirical and magical knowledge, but growth in itself is not a matter of cultural emphasis. It is of the very nature of human life. It emanates from

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COMMUNAL FISHING AND FISHING MAGIC IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES OF THE GOLD COAST.

By M. Fortes.

121 Social Anthropology, like every science, deals with abstractions. Religion, magic, social organization, law, etc., are not directly accessible to field observation *in toto* and in their conceptual purity. What the anthropologist sees in the field are social situations—the particular experiments, as it were, of a culture. These are composite events, patterns in which several aspects of culture and a variety of institutions and techniques are represented. When two friends stop to greet each other, we have a very simple situation of brief duration representing merely an instance of etiquette. But when we consider the social processes which lead up to and culminate in the relationship of marriage, we are faced with a whole series of situations linked in a temporal sequence, involving etiquette, economic techniques (gift exchanges), legal institutions (bride wealth), religious institutions (sacrifice to ancestor spirits), moral and social norms, and so forth. Such configurations, varying as these examples indicate from simple and momentary situations which represent a single phase of an institution to complex series of events which epitomize the whole culture in all its aspects, form the raw material of anthropological field work. To establish the characteristics of an institution like bride-wealth we abstract the relevant components of many "marriage configurations"—i.e., configurations of a single type—and regard the other components as of subordinate or even negligible significance. To consider a system like religion, magic, or social organization we require to abstract the relevant components of a wide range of configurations of different types: births, marriages, funerals, economic situations, ritual festivals, etc.

These abstractions, essential for the generalized descriptions of institutions or aspects of culture, have been the main concern of anthropologists. In its extreme form, *e.g.*, in the comparative work of Tylor or Frazer, this has led writers to strip what they consider relevant facts completely of all cultural context. In the best functional studies interest has been focussed primarily upon the correlation of institutions with one another, and upon plotting the relationship of particular institutions to the whole of a culture. The fact that the social situations susceptible of direct observation in the field, besides providing the raw materials for sociological generalization, also constitute a problem for investigation has been largely overlooked.

Every type of social situation exhibits a definite structure. The component institutions, techniques, and norms of behaviour manifested in it are inter-related in a manner specific to that situation. In functional terminology, the "proximate function" of

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●/2/ each within the context of the particular type of social situation is specific to it and can be determined only from the analysis of the situation itself. It may differ considerably from its "institutional function" in relation to the culture as a whole. Thus the rules of exogamy viewed in relation to the entire social organization of a people may demonstrably serve to emphasize and preserve the integrity of an unilateral kinship group. But in a particular situation, a man barred from marriage with a woman he desires may enter into an illicit sexual intrigue with her, which may lead to dissension within the kinship group. In such a case the "proximate function" of the rules of exogamy appears to be the very contrary of their "institutional function." This is an hypothetical instance; but it will suffice to illustrate what we mean when we say that the components of any type of social situation are inter-related in a manner specific to it or that it exhibits a definite structure. The aim of the present paper is to analyze the structure of a situation which recurs with some frequency in the life of a tribe recently visited by the writer.

226 221 [805] Among the Tallensi, a tribe of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, the communal fishing expeditions which take place every year are events of this kind. They extend over a period of about a month, between the close of the dry season and the commencement of the heavy rains. During this month which coincides with most of the native lunar month *Sigkpeon* ("Dry rains"), and the European month of April, rain falls sporadically (five times, at varying intervals, in 1934, a dry year) but sufficiently for the sowing of early millet and some of the minor crops. Sowing demands the concentration of all energies of the family for a day or two after a fall of rain; then it is discontinued until the next fall of rain. Besides sowing, other technological and economic activities compete with fishing during this month. House repairs and rebuilding are still in progress and of course the markets, which take place on two days out of three within the tribal area, are in full swing. All these activities are equally shared by men and women, assisted by the children of both sexes.

226 262 Fishing therefore is not an activity of an economic off-season. Its calendrical incidence depends primarily on the technique employed, which is suitable only for shallow pools; and the pools are shallowest at the end of the dry season. It is, also, only indirectly correlated with the diminution in food supplies which becomes general during the "dry rains", since fish, like meat, is valued as a delicacy and never as a substitute for the staple cereal foods. In any case, the catch is usually too small to influence the economy of food supplies materially. Nevertheless, the luxury value of fish furnishes one of the main inducements to join the fishing expeditions.

226 But the greatest attraction of these fishing expeditions to young and old, men and women, is the excitement and thrill they provide, the immediate pleasure of participation in a communal enterprise with the possibility, however remote, of some gain.

133 226 The pools fished lie in the bed of the White Volta River. When the rains cease the water level gradually sinks till eventually only a series of pools divided from one another

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There the psychological facts are, one might say, re-created, socially transformed by the magic into a collective risk against which protection is provided by the very act which affirms its existence. The magic is concerned not with the safety of individuals but with the security of the group. Above all, responsiblity for the security of the group rests, in the last resort, upon the owner of the pool, the one who brings the group into being. Through the magic this responsibility is affirmed as a privilege associated with the ownership rather than a burden. Individual magical precautions would be as incongruous with this communal situation as a particular individual's chances of injury are unpredictable. In brief, the magical organization of the situation depends upon the exploitation of psychological factors latent in it; but these psychological factors cannot be regarded as the source of the magic. Ownership, magic, and organization of the expedition constitute a unitary structure the disruption of which would entirely alter the significance of any of the constituents.

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At the outset of this paper the view was expressed that every type of social situation exhibits a definite structure. An analysis was then made of a typical social situation met with among the Tallensi. Various institutions (chieftainship) techniques (magic) and norms of behaviour (disposal of the catch) each determined in part by a context lying beyond the boundaries of the fishing expedition, were shown to enter into the situation. It was suggested, also, that the fishing magic is the factor which binds the different components into a definite pattern. The question arises why is it that situations such as this exhibit a specific structure? Is it due to the peculiar ensemble of institutions, etc., represented? Is it due to the nuclear interest—viz., the catching of fish—of the situation? Or is it due to the fact that what we differentiate as institutions, etc., appear in such situations, as the concrete responses of individuals and groups to one another in terms of social definitions and psychological impulses arising solely from the situation itself? This is a problem which requires the examination of many types of situations comprising similar combinations of institutions, techniques, and norms of behaviour.[1]

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[1] This paper was written after my first expedition to the field, in 1934-5, as a Fellow of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures.

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INTRODUCTION

This bulletin records the work of the Department of Agriculture in North Mamprusi during the years 1932 to 1936. It is divided into two parts: the first contains a description of the indigenous system of agriculture and the survey methods followed in studying it; and the second gives the results of preliminary trials, as an introduction to future experimental work. 128

North Mamprusi comprises three political sub-districts, Navrongo Area, Zuarungu Area, and Kusasi (Bawku) Area. These areas have a number of features in common, the most important from our point of view, being a dense population, and a primitive system of "fixed" agriculture. The most densely populated area is Zuarungu, where a shortage of cultivated foods is a fairly common experience. It was mainly to find the causes of this food shortage and to suggest ameliorative measures that the Department of Agriculture commenced preliminary survey work in this area in 1932. Unfortunately, owing to shortage of staff, the work had to be suspended in 1933, with a consequent loss of continuity. It was recommenced in 1934, however, and the scope was enlarged to admit of a certain amount of experimental work at Zuarungu and Navrongo, and survey work in the Navrongo Area. Some of the survey work was also repeated in Zuarungu Area to supply confirmatory information upon 1932 data, particularly yield data, since it was known that 1932 was an exceptionally favourable season. In 1935 the experimental side of the work received more attention; similarly in 1936. And in 1936 survey work was extended to Zebilla, in Kusasi Area. Zuarungu has been the headquarters throughout. 634 121

We have now obtained a fairly detailed knowledge of local agriculture and a certain amount of experimental evidence upon the best way in which it can be improved. All our experience points to some form of "mixed farming" (1) as a solution of the problem. Mr. F. A. Stockdale, C.M.G., C.B.E. (now Sir Frank Stockdale), Agricultural Adviser to the Secretary of State, visited Zuarungu and Navrongo in December, 1935, and recommended (2) the expansion of our work to enable us to investigate more 121

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121 fully a system of mixed farming suitable for the peculiar conditions obtaining locally. In 1936, the writer visited Northern Nigeria to study the progress made in mixed farming there. A report upon this visit has been published as Bulletin No. 33 of the Department (3).

It is realized that Nigerian experience can serve only as a guide to us here, for whilst environmental conditions are similar, economic conditions differ considerably. The object of this bulletin is to record the results of observations, surveys, and experimental work, as an introduction to the study of mixed farming locally. The survey methods followed have been recorded in the hope that they may be of value when similar work is contemplated in other districts.

Our method of approach to the improvement of local agriculture is by surveys and observations, followed by experiment, demonstration, and extension, in that order. So far, in North Mamprusi, we have reached the stage of experiment and quiet demonstration.

Part I.—STUDY OF INDIGENOUS AGRICULTURE.

Section I.—Introductory Notes upon the District.

128 The farming methods of the primitive tribes inhabiting North Mamprusi are practically unique in the Gold Coast. Before discussing the results of surveys and experimental work it is proposed to outline in this section some of the main features of the district which have a bearing upon local agriculture and which are likely to affect its future development. It is necessary to state that most remarks are based upon experience gained in the Zuarungu and Navrongo Areas; although most of what is said will apply to Kusasi Area, it is probable that greater experience will reveal some differences.

Situation.

131 North Mamprusi is situated in the extreme North East corner of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast; it lies roughly between 10° 30′ and 11° North latitude and 0° and 1° 30′ West longitude and covers an area of 3,559 square miles. It is bounded on the South by South Mamprusi (Gambaga District), on the West by Lawra-Tumu District, and on the North and East by French West Africa.

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Section II.—AGRICULTURAL SURVEY.

●121 In this section it is proposed to record the methods adopted in studying local agriculture as well as to give the results of the survey.

Nature of the Problem.

As already mentioned in the introduction, our main object in coming to North Mamprusi was to investigate the causes of recurrent food shortage and to suggest and to implement ameliorative measures. It had been generally accepted that the shortage was due to the congestion of population; but it could not be said that more land was the solution of the problem until details of local methods of crop production were known; for the amount of food available depended as much upon the intensity of cultivation as upon the area cultivated. Efforts made in the past to encourage migration to the South had met with little success. Table I on page 8 shows that the density of population in Navrongo Area is only half that of Zuarungu Area, and yet the people in Navrongo Area suffer from food shortage. This suggests that simply to provide more land by encouraging emigration could at best afford only temporary relief, and that the problem is agricultural as well as political.

Survey Methods.

Information Required.

The information we set out to obtain before we could express an opinion upon the situation was as follows:—

1. Size of farms, man power expended and population supported per unit area.
2. The system of farming followed, with details of methods of cultivation, crop mixtures, rotations, areas under different crops, yields, and methods of maintaining fertility.
3. Economy of crops after production—storage, utilisation, disposal of surplus, market prices.
4. Position of livestock in the farm economy.
5. Natural vegetation and environmental factors in relation to food supply.

The scope of our work was limited by the staff available. Accuracy was considered to be of first importance, and quantitative data were collected wherever possible.

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Approach to Problem.

Two methods of approach to the study suggested themselves. 121
The first, an intensive method, was to select an area and to take records from every compound within it and to survey all the land farmed by these compounds. The second, an eclectic method, was to select centres in different parts of the district and at each centre to select a number of compounds for detailed record. There were advantages in favour of each method but it was considered that, if care was taken in the selection of compounds, the second had more to recommend it for our purpose; this was the method adopted.

Selection of Centres for Record.

After discussion with the Political Officer for the district, centres of operation were considered, bearing in mind typicalness, accessibility, and the amenability of the Chief. The last is important for no matter how desirable a place might be for other reasons, no useful work could be done if the Chief was antagonistic. The centres finally selected were decided upon after touring the district. In all, records have been taken at ten centres distributed as follows:—

In Zuarungu Area in 1932 at Bongo, Nangodi, Sambruno, Tongo and Zuarungu.

In Navrongo Area in 1934 at Chana, Kologo, Wiaga, and in 1935 at Navrongo.

In Kusasi Area at Zebilla in 1936.

Selection of Compounds for Record.

At each centre a large number of compounds was visited with 124
a representative of the Chief, and from amongst these, six compounds were selected for record. Care was taken to choose compounds as typical of the district as possible. Thus the compounds of Chiefs, headmen, and strangers, were avoided if possible, and also the compounds of pensioners. Care had to be taken not to record the compound of a man pushed forward by the Chief simply to humour the white man. As with the Chief, so with the farmer, he must be amenable to our intrusion. The compounds we selected were probably rather above the average, and at Tongo we unwittingly included the farms of three headmen. At this early

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Names among the Tallensi of the Gold Coast

FORTES, M. MEYER, Cambridge

African languages are still, for the most part, living languages in a unique sense. They exist only in the activity of speech. Everyone who has lived with an African community that lacks the art of writing and has experienced the thrill of learning their language in the daily give-and-take of work and friendship, knows how fresh and spontaneous, one might almost say poetical, such a language seems. One is always being surprised by the discovery of some new aspect or implication of the most commonplace utterance. The contrast with European languages, weighed down as they are by the accumulated deposits of thirty centuries of literacy, can be startling. By endowing language with a separate existence in its own right, literacy can be a barrier between it and the general body of custom. I suppose that is why so much of the vocabulary of a European language is like a hoard of ancient coins, still circulating though defaced and debased in worth beyond recognition. For a primitive African society its language is the very essence of its total body of custom, its breath of life. That is why the language of an African people always seems so graphic and alive for it is daily and hourly nourished by the activities and thoughts, the feelings and beliefs of the people. It is in an African people's language that its culture is most faithfully and fully pictured. This, it seems to me, is the outstanding lesson which we owe to Professor WESTERMANN's deep and devoted scholarship in African languages, history and cultures. It is certainly the lesson his inspired teaching imparted to those who were able, as I fortunately was, to spend a little time with him before going out to the field. And there is one other lesson we owe in no small degree to his studies. It is that African languages are exceedingly rich and subtle.

Nowhere does this appear so vividly as in the proverbs, songs, stories, myths and legends of African peoples, their oral literature, as it has sometimes been called; and here Professor WESTERMANN is surely the arch-connoisseur. A minor element in this aspect of African culture is the theme of my essay.

How one addresses or refers to a person is a matter of great importance in all societies. We know only too well what subtle distinctions lie in the nomenclature of reference and address we use in our own culture. We do not, for example, normally use a person's given name in speaking to or of him unless he is an intimate of ours in some degree. In most African societies the niceties of nomenclature are even more important. As is well known, the terminologies used to distinguish kinsfolk, persons of rank, holders of religious office, and such like, serve not only to designate these persons but also to determine conduct towards them. It must be noted, however, that what these designations do is to put individuals into categories and classes. The individuals themselves are, so to speak, hidden behind the

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●121 mask of chief or priest, or even simply father, uncle, or spouse, for purposes of the situation and the relationship. Yet the individual himself, the common basis of the several offices and ranks and kinship statuses he may exercise, is not thus extinguished. His very existence as an individual, let alone his personality and idiosyncrasies, affects everything in which he plays a part and must therefore receive social recognition. That, no doubt, is the basic reason why every individual, in all human societies, has a name of his own, a given name or names — though not necessarily the same given name all his life. Names may change in accordance with stages in the life cycle as among the Andamanese, or as among some tribes of Sarawak on the birth of the first child and on the death of children[1]). At least, this is how these well known instances are usually represented. But we must be careful. For a teknonym or initiation name may have the function of classifying a person rather than of specifying him individually. It might just as well be called a title as a name. The point is that naming, as a means of identifying the unique individual, shades over into naming as a means of pointing out where and how the individual fits into society; and this is not surprising for the paradox of the individual is that he is unique simply by reason of the specific combination, in his life-space, of experiences in social relationships and situations shared by others and falling on him as a consequence of where he fits into society.

But in Africa names are not just a verbal notation for the different phases or aspects of a person's status and life history. They are symbols deeply charged with meaning derived from the whole culture. We know this also from other cultures both of the past and of contemporary ethnological interest. It has been reported of certain South American tribes that knowledge of a person's secret name may give the knower magical power over him[2]), and similar magical power through names is believed to be possible among many other peoples. Sir JAMES FRAZER explained taboos on names by the argument that savages regard their names as a vital part of themselves and therefore to be kept secret lest knowledge of the name give power over the person to some ill-wisher[3]). We remember how, in the Biblical story of the Creation, God brings His creatures to Adam for him to name them, so that their names are coeval with their beginnings, and throughout the Old Testament, as PEDERSEN shows, "the name is the very peculiarity and power of the soul"[4]).

This notion, though perhaps not quite so metaphysically formulated, would meet with understanding among many African peoples. When, in Ashanti, a man names his son after a beloved friend or after a renowned ancestor, he is tacitly hoping that his son may be like the friend or the ancestor in character and deeds,

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[1]) The most valuable comparative survey of the subject of names and naming in ethnology is still that of THURNWALD, in MAX EBERTS *Reallexikon d. Vorgeschichte*, 1927, article s. v. Name, Namengebung. On the Sarawak (Kayan-Kenyah-Kelantan) customs referred to, see F. H. POLLARD and E. BANKS, "Teknonymy and other customs among Kayan, etc." in *Sarawak Museum Journal*, iv, pt. 4, no. 15, 1927. Similar customs are described among Australian aborigines in Dr. DONALD F. THOMSON'S excellent paper on "Names and Naming in the Wik Monkan Tribe", *J. Royal Anthrop. Inst.* LXXVI, pt. 2, 1946.

[2]) References are in THURNWALD, loc. cit.

[3]) See *The Golden Bough*, abridged edn. ch. 22.

[4]) JOHS. PEDERSEN, *Israel*, I—II, pp. 245. sqq.

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as if the name could have a character moulding, — a soul shaping, as he might put it, — effect. Such names, moreover, make up a living record of notable events or persons or achievements in the father's life.

It is in this sense, mainly because of what they symbolise and record, that names and naming customs can be said to be part of a people's oral literature. There is no better testimony to this than in one of Professor WESTERMANN's own linguistic explorations, the enchanting life story which he recorded of the Ewe Bonifatius Foli[5]). It will be remembered that the story opens with Foli's explanation of how he came by his name. Had he been born a commoner, he says, he would have been called Kofi, the day name for a male born on Friday. But he was of chiefly descent and so received the corresponding aristocratic name, a name which no commoner would normally bear.

The ethnographical and linguistic writings on Africa abound with examples pertinent to my theme, but I want to illustrate it from my own field work among the Tallensi of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast[6]). All Tallensi are curious and alert in the matter of personal names. Early in my stay among them I once asked a young man what was the point of name giving. This is what he answered: "(The reason) why they give names is that you may know so-and-so and the other one, and know what he looks like; for if they did not confer names on you they would not know you." The name stands for the individual, is part of what marks him out from others. This feeling about the individuality of a name is shown in the delight with which Tallensi meet someone bearing the same name as themselves. Two persons with the same name call each other "*n-wu'uri*", (my name-sake) and exchange friendly banter.

The Tallensi have a technical term for the giving of a name, *pit wu'uri*, to confer a name; and this term has a cognate which, we shall see, is very revealing, *pot wu'uri* to utter or announce a name. Let us consider, first, the giving of names. This is quite a complex matter. I realised this shortly after arriving among the Tallensi, on the occasion of Ma'an-ɔb's funeral. Just before any burial, an elder offers a red cock to the dead with an invocation that he may depart and join his ancestors. I was struck by the fact that the elder, in this case, addressed the dead man as Yin, not as Ma'an-ɔb; and this led to a train of enquiries.

I thus discovered that a person can have, and very commonly does have two given names. One is his *wu'ur-zoo*, his open or everyday name; the other is his *seyerma wu'uri*, his spirit-guardian name. It is the latter name that is invoked at death and on other ritual occasions in which a person's well being is at issue. It is the name used, for instance, when a person's evil Pre-destiny is exorcised[7]). It is not a secret name. Though it is not usually known outside the circle of his close kin, those who normally share with him in sacrifices to common ancestors of

[5]) D. WESTERMANN, "Kindheitserinnerung des Togonegers Bonifatius Foli". *Mitt. d. Sem. f. Orient. Sprachen*, XXXIV, iii, 1931.

[6]) I have described much of the life and social organisation of the Tallensi in my two books *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi* (1945) and *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*, (1949).

[7]) For a fuller account of this notion and of the notion of the *seyer* see op. cit., *The Web of Kinship*, passim. See also R. S. RATTRAY, *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, vol. II. passim.